

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-02 SS-14 SP-02 NSCE-00 PM-03

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PA-01 PRS-01 USIE-00 H-01 /037 W

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INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 18672

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINT, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS TO SPEED UP AQUINO CASE; AQUINO FOUND GUILTY,
SENTENCED TO DEATH.

1. SENATOR JOVITO SALONGA, WHO IS PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY FOR
DETAINED SENATOR BENIGNO AQUINO, TOLD EMBOFFS EVENING NOVEM-
BER 24 THAT AQUINO'S MILITARY LAWYER CALLED ON MRS. AQUINO FOR
SEVERAL HOURS NOVEMBER 23. HE TOLD HER THAT THE MILITARY
TRIBUNAL HAS RECEIVED ORDERS TO FINISH THE AQUINO CASE AS
QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, IN ANY EVENT BEFORE A NEW US BASES
AGREEMENT IS REACHED. SALONGA SPECULATED THAT PRESIDENT
MARCOS WANTS A QUICK GUILTY VERDICT, AND THEN HE WILL
PARDON AQUINO AND SEND HIM INTO EXILE AS A FACE-SAVING WAY
OF REMOVING BOTH AQUINO'S POLITICAL POTENTIAL AND HIS CASE'S
EFFECT ON US-RP RELATIONS. AQUINO WAS DEPRESSED AND "CYNICAL"
ABOUT HIS PROSPECTS WHEN SALONGA SAW HIM AFTERNOON NOVEMBER
24. SALONGA "HOPES A WAY CAN BE FOUND" TO HAVE MARCOS
RELEASE AQUINO INTO EXILE BEFORE HIS CASE ENDS. HE AND
THE AQUINO FAMILY, HE SAID, ARE CONTINUING TO ADVOCATE
EXILE FOR AQUINO AS A WAY OUT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION,
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BUT OTHER POLITICAL LAWYERS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO AQUINO
(DIOKNO, TANADA, RODRIGO, AND OTHERS) ARE ADVISING HIM TO
STAY IN THE PHILIPPINES, IN DETENTION IF NECESSARY, AS A
SYMBOL OF OPPOSITION TO MARCOS.

2. NOVEMBER 25 HEARING OF AQUINO CASE WILL BE REPORTED
SEPTTEL.

3. COMMENT: MARCOS APPARENTLY WANTS TO REMOVE THE AQUINO CASE AS AN RP-US IRRITANT BEFORE A BASES SETTLEMENT REACHES US CONGRESS. AT THE SAME TIME MARCOS CONTINUES TO WANT TO ELIMINATE AQUINO AS A CREDIBLE RIVAL. HENCE THE PRESIDENT'S APPARENT DETERMINATION TO PUSH THE TRIAL TO CONCLUSION, HAVE AQUINO FOUND GUILTY AND THEN, BUT ONLY THEN, PARDON AND EXILE HIM. AQUINO, ON THE OTHER HAND, SEEMS ACUTELY AWARE THAT HIS OWN OPTIONS ARE NARROWING. TO ACCEPT PARDON AND EXILE AFTER A GUILTY VERDICT WOULD BE A MAJOR DISGRACE, AND HE MIGHT FEEL HONOR-BOUND TO CHOOSE MARTYRDOM IN JAIL INSTEAD. THUS THE MAIN HOPE FOR AQUINO'S EXILE WOULD APPEAR TO LIE IN INDUCING MARCOS TO RELEASE HIM BEFORE THE TRIAL ENDS. AQUINO'S LAWYERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO PROLONG THE TRIAL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE BY APPEALING MINOR POINTS TO SUPREME COURT, BUT MARCOS ULTIMATELY CONTROLS THE PACE OF THE TRIAL AND EVIDENTLY SEES STRONG REASONS FOR SPEEDING IT UP AT THE MOMENT.

4. AFTER FOREGOING DRAFTED, MILITARY COURT EVENING OF NOVEMBER 25 FOUND AQUINO GUILTY OF VARIOUS SPECIFICATIONS AND CHARGES (MURDER, SUBVERSION, ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS) AND SENTENCED HIM, ALONG WITH CORPUS AND BUSCAYNO, TO DEATH BY FIRING SQUAD. FURTHER COMMENT FOLLOWS.
NEWSOM

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